

## Message Text

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S E C R E T CANBERRA 3613

EXDIS

FOR DEPUTY ASST SECRETARY ZURHELLEN FROM AMBASSADOR GREEN

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

LTAGS: PFOR, AS, US

SUBJ: REPLACEMENT OF LANCE BARNARD AS AUSTRALIAN MINISTER FOR  
DEFENSE

1. SEPTELS REVIEW EVENTS OF LAST FEW DAYS FOLLOWING RESIGNATION  
OF MINISTER FOR DEFENSE LANCE BARNARD FROM PARLIAMENT JUNE 2.  
PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM NOW ENGAGED IN RESHUFFLING CABINET, WITH  
NEW TEAM TO BE ANNOUNCED JUNE 6.

2. RUMORS ABOUND THAT RESHUFFLE MAY BE EXTENSIVE, BUT THERE ARE  
FEW HARD FACTS. HOWEVER, VIRTUALLY ALL SOURCES INDICATED THAT  
PRESENT MINISTER FOR SCIENCE, WILLIAM MORRISON (ALSO CURRENTLY  
MINISTER ASSISTING THE MINISTER FOR DEFENSE) WILL BE NAMED MIN-  
ISTER FOR DEFENSE. SOME OF PRESS LEAKS SPECULATING THAT MORRISON  
WILL BE NEXT MINISTER FOR DEFENSE HAVE BEEN TRACED DIRECTLY TO  
WHITLAM, AND MORRISON HAS CANCELLED TRIP THIS MONTH TO SOVIET  
UNION AND U.S. TO OBSERVE VARIETY OF SCIENTIFIC PROJECTS.

3. THE CABINET CHANGE UNDER CONSIDERATION OF GREATEST INTEREST  
TO U.S., IS WHO WILL REPLACE BARNARD AS DEFENSE MINISTER. MORRI-  
SON IS CLEARLY UNLIKE BARNARD IN ANY CONSTRUCTIVE SENSE AND  
CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO GIVE U.S. THE KIND OF POSITIVE SUPPORT  
BARNARD GAVE US, MOST RECENTLY, FOR EXAMPLE IN CONNECTION WITH  
HIS STRONG PUBLIC STATEMENT ON MAYAGUEZ AFFAIR. ON MAJOR  
DEFENSE ISSUES PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM WILL, OF COURSE, CON-

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TINUE TO BE THE CONTROLLING FORCE, EVEN IF MORRISON IS NEXT

MINISTER FOR DEFENSE.

4. PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM NOT ONLY HAS THE OPTION TO CHOOSE WHOM HE WISHES FROM LABOR MINISTRY FOR SPECIFIC PORTFOLIOS BUT HAS REAL NEED TO GIVE IMPRESSION OF IMPROVED VIGOR AND EFFICIENCY THROUGHOUT CABINET. I PRESUME WHITLAM IS AWARE OF OUR RESERVED ATTITUDE TOWARDS MORRISON. IT IS WIDELY KNOWN THAT MORRISON AND SIR ARTHUR TANGE (SECRETARY OF DEPT OF DEFENSE) HAD MAJOR DIFFERENCES WHEN MORRISON WAS IN AUSTRALIAN FOREIGN SERVICE AND TANGE WAS SECRETARY OF DEPT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. ARTICLE IN "FINANCIAL REVIEW" JUNE 2 BY BRIAN TOOHEY (WHO HAS TOP LEVEL CONTACTS) REFERRED TO THESE DIFFERENCES AND SAID TANGE WOULD RESIGN IF MORRISON WAS NAMED HIS BOSS.

5. ON OTHER HAND, MORRISON HAS BEEN CLOSELY INVOLVED WITH OPERATIONS OF AUSTRALIAN DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FOR PAST YEAR OR SO. HE WAS BRIEFED ON JOINT DEFENSE FACILITIES IN JULY, 1974, AND WHATEVER RISKS FLOW FROM THAT BRIEFING HAVE BEEN INCURRED ALREADY.

GREEN

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